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NATO CONFIDENTIAL FROM WASHINGTON

POLITICAL ANALYSIS: MOSCOW'S SUBTLER TACTICS TOWARD
DISSIDENTS

1. RECENT SOVIET TREATMENT OF THE DISSIDENT COMMUNITY
INDICATES THAT AUTHORITIES HAVE OPTED FOR SOMETHING SUBTLER
THAN THE OUTRIGHT REPRESSION MANIFEST IN THE DECEMBER TRIAL
OF DISSIDENT BIOLOGIST SERGEI KOVALEV AND THE ARREST AND
CHARGES LODGED AGAINST DISSIDENT PHYSICIST ANDREI
TVERDOKHLEBOV, MEMBERS OF THE MOSCOW BRANCH OF AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL. ALTHOUGH THIS APPROACH MAY BE SHORT-LIVED,
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IT IS CLEARLY DESIGNED TO:

(A)--MINIMIZE UNPLEASANT FOREIGN PUBLICITY AT A TIME WHEN THE REGIME WISHES TO EMPHASIZE THE MORE POSITIVE FEATURES OF THE 25TH CONGRESS PROGRAM; AND

(B)--CAPITALIZE ON RECENT GESTURES MADE BY THE USSR IN LIMITED FULFILLMENT OF THE BASKET III PROVISIONS OF CSCE.

2. AN ON AGAIN, OFF-AGAIN CYCLE OF REPRESSION OF DISSENT HAS MARKED SOVIET INTERNAL POLICY SINCE THE FALL OF KHRUSHCHEV. HOW BREZHNEV'S RELATIVELY MODERATE LINE FARES AT THE CONGRESS WILL HELP SHAPE SOVIET TACTICS FOR HANDLING DISSIDENTS. BUT IN ANY CASE, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THEIR AGITATION, GUIDED, INSPIRED, AND DEFENDED BY NOBEL LAUREATE SAKHAROV.

3. TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS: THE HEAVY SENTENCE GIVEN KOVALEV (SEVEN YEARS IN PRISON AND THREE IN EXILE), SIMILARLY SEVERE PUNISHMENT METED OUT EARLIER TO VLADIMIR OSIPOV (FOR PUBLISHING VECHE, A "SAMIZDAT" JOURNAL OF SLAVOPHILE ORIENTATION), AND THE PROSPECT OF THE SAME KIND OF FATE FOR TVERDOKHLEBOV CULMINATE THUS FAR THE LONG CAMPAIGN TO INTIMIDATE IF POSSIBLE, AND IMPRISON IF NOT, THE GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH SAKHAROV.

4. THE TIMING OF THE CRACKDOWN (KOVALEV'S TRIAL WAS HELD IN EARLY DECEMBER) SEEMS MORE THAN FORTUITOUS. THE SOVIETS SUFFERED A BAD AUTUMN IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD.

(A)--IN SEPTEMBER THEY WERE MANEUVERED BY THE UNOFFICIAL ART COMMUNITY INTO PERMITTING TWO SUCCESSFUL AND, TO THE ORTHODOX, DISTASTEFUL EXHIBITIONS OF UNSANCTIONED ART.

(B)--IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, RESPECTIVELY, SAKHAROV AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHED BOOKS ABROAD CRITICAL OF THE SOVIET UNION ON POLITICAL PRISONERS AND OTHER MATTERS.

(C)--CONTINUED ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA IN THE WESTERN PRESS ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND RELATED IMPORTUNINGS OF A SERIES OF WESTERN LEADERS, INCLUDING FRENCH COMMUNIST BOSS
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GEORGES MARCHAIS, HAVE MADE THE CSCE MORE OF A MIXED BLESSING THAN MOSCOW ANTICIPATED.

(D)--CROWNING THE IGNOMINY WAS THE DECEMBER 5 AWARD OF THE NOBEL PRIZE TO SAKHAROV, LARGELY ON THE STRENGTH OF WHAT MOSCOW CONSIDERED HIS ANTI-SOVIET ACTIVITY.

5. THUS THE KOVALEV TRIAL MUST HAVE BEEN SANCTIONED AS A

GESTURE OF SELF-AFFIRMATION BY KREMLIN HARDLINERS AND MUST HAVE BEEN A SOP TO THEM. ITS TIVING SEEMPD DESIGVEE TO PROVIDE COUNTERPOINT TO SAKHAROV'S NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARD.

THE LONG INVESTIGATIONS PRECEDING KOVALEV'S TRIAL AND THE IMPENDING TRIAL OF TVERDOKHLEBOV HAVE TOUCHED ALL MAJOR AREAS OF DISSIDENT ACTIVITY; EFFECTIVELY SUPPRESSED THE ACTIVITY OF THE MOSCOW CHAPTER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL; AND PUT ON NOTICE LESS WELL KNOWN ACTIVISTS WHO HAVE BEGUN TO MOVE INTO THE FRONT RANKS OF DISSIDENT LEADERSHIP DEPLETED BY PROSECUTION AND EMIGRATION.

6. EASING THE STRICTURES SELECTIVELY: AS THE 25TH CONGRESS APPROACHES, HOWEVER, THE REGIME IS DEMONSTRATING ONCE AGAIN ITS SENSITIVITY TO WESTERN OPINION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES.

(A)--MRS. SAKHAROV WAS PERMITTED TO RETURN HOME AFTER SHE HAD ACCEPTED HER HUSBAND'S NOBEL PRIZE AND DELIVERED HIS CRITICAL, IF NOT ACTUALLY ANTI-SOVIET, NOBEL LECTURE.

(B)--ON JANUARY 1, FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE A. SUKHAREV FELT IT NECESSARY TO DEFEND PUBLICLY THE HANDLING OF THE KOVALEV TRIAL.

(C)--THE TVERDOKHLEBOV TRIAL APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER THE CONGRESS.

(D)--LEONID PLYUSHCH WAS RELEASED FROM PSYCHIATRIC DETENTION, AND HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE PERMITTED TO EMIGRATE.

(E)--LONG-TIME ACTIVIST AND REFUSENIK SCIENTIST ALEXANDER LUNTS, WHO HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE JEWISH "SUNDAY SEMINAR" (SEE BELOW), HAS NOW BEEN TOLD THAT HE WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE USSR, AS HAS SCULPTURE ERNST NEIZVESTNY AND SOME OTHER PROMINENT REFUSENIKS.

7. THESE GESTURES HARDLY REFLECT A LIBERALIZATION. RATHER, THEY DEMONSTRATE MORE PURPOSEFULLY TO ALL CONCERNED THAT THE REGIME IS THE SOLE ARBITER OF INTERNAL POLICY, ABLE ALIKE TO REPRESS DISSENT OR TO MAKE COSMETIC GESTURES OF GOOD WILL IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS OWN PERCEPTIONS OF ITS NEEDS.

8. INTIMIDATING THE MAJORITY: IN CASE DOMESTIC DISSIDENTS MISUNDERSTOOD THE RATIONALE FOR THESE MOVES, THE AUTHORITIES RENEWED THEIR HARASSMENT OF THE ACTIVITY OF BOTH SAKHAROV AND THE JEWISH SUNDAY SEMINAR, AN INFORMAL, WEEKLY MEETING USED BY UNEMPLOYED JEWISH SCIENTISTS REFUSED

EMIGRATION VISAS TO MAINTAIN THEIR SCIENTIFIC ACUMEN AND TO FLAUNT THEIR DEFIANCE OF THE AUTHORITIES. (LATELY THE SEMINAR HAS BEGUN TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF VISITING FOREIGN SCHOLARS. DR. IMMANUEL JAKOBOVITZ, THE CHIEF RABBI

OF GREAT BRITAIN, WHO RECENTLY COMPLETED AN OFFICIAL TOUR OF THE SOVIET UNION, EVEN INFORMED HIS HOSTS OF HIS INTENTION TO DELIVER A PAPER ON "JEWISH MEDICAL ETHICS" AT THE SEMINAR AND USED HIS OFFICIALLY PROVIDED CHAIKA LIMOUSINE FOR THAT PURPOSE.) THE AUTHORITIES STEPPED UP PRESSURE AGAINST THE SEMINAR AFTER AN ATTEMPT BY ITS CHIEF ORGANIZERS TO PARTICIPATE IN A DECEMBER 24 DEMONSTRATION COMMEMORATING THE 1970 LENINGRAD AIRPLANE HIJACKING TRIAL. SEMINAR MEMBERS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN INTERROGATED BY THE AUTHORITIES, AND THEIR APARTMENTS HAVE BEEN SEARCHED.

9. THE NEW CAMPAIGN AGAINST SAKHAROV WAS LAUNCHED FOLLOWING THE NOBEL PRIZE CEREMONIES IN OSLO. THIS HARASSMENT MAY REFLECT THE REGIME'S FRUSTRATION AT BEING UNABLE TO DEAL WITH HIM MORE DIRECTLY; I.E., A REPORTED EFFORT TO OBTAIN HIS EXPULSION FROM THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES LAST FALL PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL. EVIDENCE OF THIS CAMPAIGN RANGES FROM HARASSMENT OF SAKHAROV PERSONALLY TO EFFORTS TO DEPRIVE HIM OF RESIDENCE IN MOSCOW AND THUS CUT OFF HIS CONTACTS WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS. AND IN AN OBVIOUS PROVOCATION, TASS RECENTLY REPORTED THAT MRS. SAKHAROV, IN CONFIDENTIAL

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RETURN FOR THE "THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER" SHE WAS PAID ABROAD, INTENDED TO STAGE A "SHOW" FOR WESTERN REPORTERS IN SAKHAROV'S APARTMENT FEATURING A JEWISH ACTIVIST'S RENUNCIATION OF HIS HOMELAND. SAKHAROV DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH EVENT.

10. SAKHAROV'S COMMITMENT: DESPITE THESE DEVELOPMENTS, SAKHAROV HAS REMAINED UNDAUNTED AND HAS RENEWED HIS COMMITMENT TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. HE HAS MADE THIS CLEAR IN THREE RECENT STATEMENTS: THE NOBEL LECTURE AND INTERVIEWS WITH JAPANESE AND ITALIAN NEWSMEN. IN THEM, HE REITERATED THAT:

(A)--HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR ARE VIOLATED BY IMPRISONMENT AND PSYCHIATRIC CONFINEMENT;

(B)--CONCERTED PRESSURE FROM THE WEST CAN BRING ABOUT CHANGES, AS IT FORCED THE SOVIETS TO MAKE UNWANTED CONCESSIONS AT HELSINKI;

(C)--SUCH PRESSURE IS NEEDED SINCE NO CHANGE CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE 25TH CONGRESS AND SINCE THE POST-BREZHNEV

GENERATION CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE EVEN MORE CONSERVATIVE;

(D)--NECESSARY CHANGE CAN BE BROUGHT ABOUT WITHOUT DISRUPTING THE SYSTEM; AND

(E)--HE WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE ACTIVE LEADERSHIP AND PROTECTION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT SINCE, HE THINKS, THE REGIME HAS FORECLOSED ITS OPTION OF EXILING HIM FROM THE COUNTRY BY VIRTUE OF HAVING REFUSED HIM A VISA TO OSLO ON SECURITY GROUNDS.

11. SAKHAROV'S REINFORCED SENSE OF PURPOSE--AND THE EFFORTS OF EARLIER DISSIDENT STALWARTS GENERAL PYOTJ GRIGORENKO, CHAMPION OF THE EXILED CRIMEAN TATARS, AND ANDREI AMALRIK TO REJOIN HIM IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT--ENSURES THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLE IN THE USSR WILL PERSIST DESPITE ALL EFFORTS OF THE REGIME TO SUPPRESS IT.

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12. AFTER THE 25TH CONGRESS THE REGIME MAY NO LONGER FEEL THE NEED FOR A FACADE OF MODERATION AND MAY BE EVEN MORE THAN NORMALLY SENSITIZED TO INTERNAL CRITICISM BY THE SEVERE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IT WILL FACE. THE AUTHORITIES HAVE SUFFICIENT MEANS TO REPRESS TOTALLY ANY WHO RAISE THEIR VOICES IN OPPOSITION. THEY ARE, HOWEVER, CONSTRAINED INTER ALIA BY FEAR THAT SUCH A COURSE WOULD PROVE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE BY ALIENATING THE SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL INTELLIGENTSIA UPON WHOM ECONOMIC PROGRESS IS DEPENDENT. THUS, A CONTINUATION OF THE TWO-SIDED POLICY OF EASING OF STRICTURES FOR SOME COMBINED WITH INTIMIDATION OF THE MAJORITY CAN BE EXPECTED. AND SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION BY THE REGIME IS LIKELY TO PRODUCE MORE CAUSES AND MORE DISSIDENTS. KISSINGER

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